

Message Text

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PAGE 01 VIENTI 00809 041411Z

44

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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P R 041321Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2408

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 0809

EXDIS

DEPT PASS TO SECDEF; CINCPAC; CDR JCRC

D/PW FOR HENDERSON

GENEVA FOR SIEVERTS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, CASC, LA

SUBJECT: AMCIT CHARLES M. DEAN

1. SECRETARY'S LETTERS TO PRIME MINISTER SOUVANNA
PHOUMA NAD FOREIGN MINISTER PHOUMI VONGVICHIT, AND THE
DETAILED INFORMATION WE HAVE PROVIDED TO THE PATHET LAO
APPEAR TO HAVE CONVINCED THE LAO LEADERSHIP OF THE
SERIOUSNESS WITH WHICH THE U.S. VIEWS THE DEAN/ SHARMAN
AFFAIR.

2. SOUVANNA HAD READ THE SECRETARY'S LETTERS BEFORE
MRS. DEAN AND I SAW HIM THIS AFTERNOON AND HE WAS VERY
FULSOME IN HIS EXPRESSIONS OF SYMPATHY AND CONCERN.
HE TOLD MRS. DEAN THT HE HAD REPEATEDLY DISCUSSED THE
CASE WITH PRINCE SOUPHANOUVONG AND HAD REVIEWD IT
WITH PHOUMI LAST WEEK-END. HE SAID HE WAS SURE THAT
THE PATHET LAO WOULD DO THEIR UTMOST TO RETURN THE BOYS
SAFE AND SOUND. COMMUNICATIONS AND TRANSPORTATION
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PAGE 02 VIENTI 00809 041411Z

WERE DIFFICULT IN THE PL ZONE AND IT WAS NATURAL THAT

THERE SHOULD BE DELAYS. SOUPHANOUVONG WAS FULLY FAMILIAR WITH THE CASE AND WOULD PURSUE IT PERSONNALLY WHEN HE WENT TO SAM NEUA IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS.

3. SUBSEQUENT INTERVIEW WITH SOUPHANOUVONG WAS REMARKABLY CORDIAL. HE SAID HE UNDERSTOOD PERFECTLY THE CONCERN OF THE DEAN FAMILY AND THE USG OVER CHARLES DEAN. HE HAD BEEN FOLLOWING THE MATTER CLOSELY AND HAD SENT ORDERS TO SAM NEUA FOR AN INVESTIGATION TO BE CONDUCTED AND HAD SENT RESPONSIBLE OFFICIALS TO THE AREA. THREE CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS WERE NOW INVOLVED AND ORDERS HAD BEEN GIVEN TO SEND TRANSPORTATION FOR THE BOYS. THE PATHET LAO HAD HAD TO STRIP THEIR CADRES IN THEIR ZONE IN ORDER TO STAFF VIENTIANE AND LUANG PRABANG. THIS HAD RESULTED IN A BREAKDOWN IN RADIO COMMUNICATIONS WITHIN THEIR ZONE. SOME OF THE OFFICERS WHO REMAINED WERE NOT VERY BRIGHT AND DID NOT UNDERSTAND WHAT THEY WERE SUPPOSED TO DO. FURTHERMORE, THE ROADS WERE VERY BAD AFTER THE RAINING SEASON AND SOME MOVEMENT HAD TO BE MADE ON FOOT. HE REGRETTED DEEPLY THE DELAYS THERE HAD BEEN IN GETTING INFORMATION.

4. SOUPHANOUVONG SAID HE WAS NOT SURE WHEN HE WOULD GO TO SAM NEUA BUT IT WOULD BE IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS. HE ACCEPTED WITHOUT HESITATION A LETTER FOR CHARLES DEAN FROM HIS MOTHER AND OFFERED TO TAKE A PARCEL. HE SAID HE WOULD LET HER KNOW AT ONCE WHATEVER INFORMATION HE OBTAINED. WHEN ASKED HOW LONG MRS. DEAN SHOULD STAY IN LAOS, HE SUGGESTED SHE STAY UNTIL THE FIFTEENTH OF FEBRUARY.

5. SOUPHANOUVONG SAID THAT HE APPRECIATED THE EFFORTS MADE BY THE EMBASSY TO PROVIDE INFORMATION WHICH MIGHT HELP RESOLVE THIS AFFAIR AND STATED THAT HE HOPED THE U.S. G. WOULD NOT MAKE THE CASE TOO QUOTE DRAMATIC UNQUOTE. THE LAO WISHED TO HAVE AS GOOD RELATIONS AS POSSIBLE WITH THE U.S.G. AND AN INCIDENT OF THIS KIND SHOULD NOT BE TAKEN AS INDICATING ILLWILL OR LACK OF CONCERN ON THE PART OF HIS COLLEAGUES.
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PAGE 03 VIENTI 00809 041411Z

6. SOUPHANOUVONG IS A VOLUBLE CONVERSATIONALIST BUT THROUGHOUT THE FOREGOING, MRS. DEAN AND I GOT IN A FEW COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS EDGEWISE.

7. COMMENT. I AM ENCOURAGED BY THE TURN THIS AFFAIR HAS TAKEN AND PARTICULARLY BY SOUPHANOUVONG'S COMMENTS AND THE GENERAL TONE OF OUR MEETING. WHILE I

AM RELUCTANT TO RAISE THE HOPES OF THE DEAN FAMILY
THAT THEIR ORDEAL MAY BE ALMOST AT AN END, I FOUND
SOUPHANOUVONG'S SUGGESTION THAT MRS. DEAN STAY UNTIL
ABOUT THE 15TH VERY SIGNIFICANT.

8. PLEASE PASS FOREGOING TO HOWARD DEAN.
WHITEHOUSE

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED SECDEF, CINCPAC; CDR JCRC.

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DETENTION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 04 FEB 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: SmithRJ
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975VIENTI00809
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750040-0461
From: VIENTIANE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750272/aaaacmyc.tel
Line Count: 123
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: SmithRJ
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <23 JUN 2003 by KelleyW0>; APPROVED <31 OCT 2003 by SmithRJ>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: AMCIT CHARLES M. DEAN
TAGS: MOPS, CASC, LA, US, AS, (DEAN, CHARLES M), (SHARMAN, NEIL)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006